



Lingering Chill by Tif S

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Summary: Post Season 2 Spoilers!: It's been about a week since the Snow Ball and Will finally gets a chance to truly process everything that happened over the last year, and the last few weeks. A series of short stories set mostly post season 2 with the option of between seasons 1 and 2 with the ongoing theme of comforting Will. Taking requests.

1. Attire

A/N: Well, here with a collection of good old hurt/comfort/angst/family/friendship variety. The idea for this collection came from one realization involving seasons one and two: Will didn't really truly get much of a chance to process anything between returning from the upside down coughing up slugs and the mind flayer other than that one tiny scene with Mike. Maybe in the bit between the one month later and the end scene of season 1 but it's not something we saw so we can only speculate about what went on. Anyway I am letting the feels loose with this collection. Spoilers across the board, just putting that out there, because there will most definitely be spoilers, some more than others but they are there nonetheless. Anyway per usual, I own nothing, nada. Stranger Things belongs to the Duffer Brothers and Netflix. Just showing some fan love.

Attire

His mother gives him an odd look when he walks out of his bedroom in a sweatshirt, a winter coat, gloves, a scarf and boots as the three Byers prepare to visit the chief and his daughter. Considering the first snowfall hasn't happened yet, Will isn't surprised by this fact, but he can't bring himself to care...much. Normally he's very in tune with his mother's feelings. He'd do anything to not concern her, even if it leaves him with a paralysis he can't quite identify. It's not physical. He can feel himself remove the boots in favor of his ratty sneakers. He sees the stripes of the scarf fall to the floor, the fingers of the gloves detach themselves from his skin which is clammy, a clear sign that his attire is the wrong choice, but it is there in the way he trembles.

"He likes it cold."

"You shouldn't have upset him."

"LET ME GO!"

"Will,"

He remembers everything. He remembers their fear, the Demodogs, the heat and how desperate he was to break through. He'd seen *everything*. He'd seen Bob's attack. The Mind Flayer made him watch all of it, watch as *it* wearing Will's skin had savored the pain on his mother's face as Will himself was locked further and further out of reach. After it made him lie to his mom, Dr. Owens, Mike, Hopper, Will had tried to come up with a plan, but Mind Flayer lived up to its name.

It was only through strength of hearing those old reminiscences, and the fact that he knew the Chief knew morse code that let Will send the message at all, but what had been truly terrifying, what left Will paralyzed and barely breathing in the middle of his living room, what caused his chest to tighten was the *fire*. The most excruciating and horrible and absolutely terrifying dangerous deathly pain, but he had been glad for it. He'd been *glad*, because he knew it would break the connection. Get him out of the void...again.

"Will, Will, Baby..." Will doesn't react, can't react as he feels his mom's arms around him. His attention is focused on his breathing, on freezing breath that probably isn't even there as his balance is lost. "Jonathan!"

What is probably only moments but feels like hours or days later, Will is on the couch, his brother beside him. His mother is not in the room, and Will feels his breathing go shallow again.

"Mom's making hot chocolate." Jonathan says.

Will nods, closing his eyes against the strange feeling in his brain, the spinning.

"So why were you dressed for going to war with the abominable anyway?"

Will shrugs, but still feels himself shivering as his voice is barely there. "It likes the cold."

It takes his brother a minute to catch up, but when he finally does, he frowns. "Oh..."

Will didn't expect his brother to understand, how could he? He wasn't the one stuck in the void, the upside-down, stuck in the hive mind of a shadow monster who was trying to kill his friends and family. But the single syllable was enough to ignite his fear and shame anew. "Sorry...I...I'll go finish getting ready." Will tries to stand only to be pulled gently back down.

"What are you apologizing for?" Jonathan asks. "Huh?"

"It's over." Will shifts under his brother's inquiring gaze. "I shouldn't still be scared."

At his brother's words, Jonathan closes his eyes as he remembers watching as Nancy shoved the poker into Will, his mother turning up the heat mercilessly as they aimed to get the monster out of him. "You have every right to be scared." He says. "We all were."

The scent of chocolate enters Will's nostrils at the same moment he hears his mother humming a Christmas song under her breath. She sets a tray with three mugs down on the coffee table as she takes a seat next to Will. Instinctively, he finds himself leaning back into her holding his mug in a white knuckled grasp.

"Feeling better?"

Will nods finally feeling comfortable to release the breath he'd been holding. He didn't feel *better*. He isn't sure if he'll feel *better* for a while, but he knows he is safe, safe to have the feelings he is having and right now that's enough.

A/N: So, okay, if anyone has anything in particular, they want me to write for this collection, leave it below. It can take place between seasons 1 and 2, post 2, in the month between getting Will back and the final scene, AU'ed a bit, anything as long it is of the hurt/comfort variety, based on a lyric a quote from the show, a bit of dialogue anything involving any characters. I've got some more ideas, but I always love more.

2. Kin

A/N: Hello, this entry was requested by Guest who wanted something with Will and Eleven. This is what I came up with. It can be read as a continuation of Attire or as a stand alone. This has both Eleven's and Will's perspectives and a bit of a holiday leaning. It was formerly titled Stepsister? as a working title, but I changed the main title to Kin, but the premise is the same. Anyway, I hope you enjoy it and per usual I do not own Stranger Things, belongs to Duffer Brothers and Netflix.

Kin (Stepsister?)

There's a tree in the middle of the room. Eleven wrinkles her nose at the smell, kind of foresty like when she was outside before he found her, but before she can comment, a knock sounds at their front door. Hopper is the one to go to open it, because she is not allowed outside, not yet. This is something she still can't understand, because he let her go to the Snow Ball with Mike.

She smiles slightly as she watches and sees Joyce, Jonathan and Will. She also senses her Papa's change in mood. She pauses in her thoughts, when had that happened, the switch from Hopper to Papa? Maybe when Hopper had told her about his girl, his *Sara*. Maybe when she'd closed the gate and despite everything felt safe with the Chief.

She senses something else as she does her scan of the room, a kind of cloying, choking panic as she sees Will pulling at his collar scanning the room himself.

"It's nice to see you again El." She hears Joyce speak, smiling gently as her boys follow behind.

"You too." Her voice comes out soft.

Jonathan greets her amicably before being sent off with Hopper to unload several boxes of decorations from their small car.

Will looks up at her, seemingly at a loss. She can't say she isn't as well. "Hi El...or...do you like Jane?"

She isn't sure. El is what she is used to, Jane is the name her mother gave her. Jane is the name on that piece of paper. She simply shrugs. The rest of the party calls her El. Kali called her Jane, but she'll let Will pick.

"I guess it doesn't really matter. They're both your names right?" He smiles shyly but it falters a bit. "But would you mind if I tried Jane?"

El senses something different in the response, the shy, kind response. She already feels a difference. Dustin is funny, always trying to break the tension. Lucas is direct, he doesn't hold back takes their party mantra too seriously sometimes is what Mike told her once. Mike is kind too, but in a different way. He's the one that teaches her things. He'll take the lead if he has to. She isn't sure about Max yet. She knows the anger she felt earlier when she was skateboarding with Mike, but little else about her.

Much the same can be said about Will Byers, she thinks. He was the lost boy, the dead boy, the back to life boy, the one she found, then he was part of the shadow monster, an unwilling victim of the hive mind, the upside-down. They're not that different. Kin, a word she came across when she decided to read the dictionary on one of the days when Hopper was working and she was stuck, stuck, stuck, in this cabin in the woods and TV became little more than pictures blurring together. Kin (someone or something of the same or similar kind). She and he were kin.

Eleven, no, Jane, nods. "I...I'd like that."

"Cool...Jane." Will nods.

"Will, El..." Joyce says. "I have a job for you."

The lights are a tangled mess, similar to his brain right now. He is afraid that if he touches them, he won't be able to be pulled back this time. He sighs internally, trying to force himself to move, to do what Jane is doing and take a handful, but he can't help but remember.

If Will's mother notices the hesitation, she doesn't say so, just watches carefully and tries to keep her own demons at bay. He knows this, because he felt it. Even when he was gone on the other side, he felt that pain that his mother is trying to stave off. It is easy for her to do. He knows it's *easier* at the very least, because he is safe, he is here, and she can breathe easier even if she hugs him a little tighter, expects him home a little earlier. He was still here and she could see him.

For Will, it was never easier. He was home. He was with his family, but he was never entirely home. It still exists for him, the cold, the emptiness. Sometimes when he is in his bedroom at night, he can feel it, even though the gate is closed, it's still there.

"Will..." He flinches slightly, only when he feels Jane's gaze, realizing he is staring intently at the lights expecting them to flicker, almost hoping they will, because only for a moment he is back in the dark hoping for a sign.

"S...sorry...s....sorry." He stammers out placing the pile back down as he allows himself to fold gently into a cross legged position on the cabin's floor.

"Why sorry?" Jane mimics him grabbing her own ball of lights.

"N...nothing." Will shakes his head, tries for an 'everything is alright' smile as he begins working the lights. "Just tired, that's all."

"Will," She studies him intently, that overly serious look that demonstrates just how haunted she is. Is that the look that his mother sees, that Mike sees, that Hopper and his brother see, when *he* looks at them? Because behind the obsession with Eggos, the curiosity, Will knows that there's something else. Mike told him as much, not in words but in the way that they approach each other. If his friend sees something extraordinary in this girl, beyond the powers, then it must be there because... "*Friends don't lie.*"

The party mantra coming out of her mouth is like a dash of frighteningly cold water. He doesn't realize until his eyes open that he's closed them at all, until the soft light of the cabin, the steady gaze of his partner in Christmas lights, his partner in darkness

coming to light shifts her position so that she's sitting next to rather than across from him. "Are we...? Are we friends?" He looks at her, really looks at her. He can't seem to form an answer to his own question, even though he knows what he wants the answer to be. He wants to be her friend, because it feels right. It feels like it fits somehow, and not just because she's friends with the rest of the party.

Jane bites her lip.. She looks around the room, at the pile of lights in their lap, at Hopper, his mother and brother unpacking house adornments ribbons and wreaths. "What's Christmas?"

Will knows that it is in her own way an affirmation of his question. She always asks Mike questions, sometimes Lucas, sometimes Dustin. She's never asked him anything before. Not like this. His questions from her have always been related to arcade games, music, D and D, safe, dancing around questions, but this is different. "Christmas... it's this holiday where you get to spend time with family, friends. There's presents and singing, dancing, food-."

"Eggos?"

Will laughs a bit. "There can be, yeah."

Jane looks down at the lights in her hand. "Lights are a part of Christmas?"

Will nods.

"Like the ones your Mom used?"

He nods again. "When I was there..." He fiddles with the lights in his hand as they steadily untangle in his grasp. "Those lights, they...they were the only connection I had."

Jane's voice is a whisper. "Hope?"

Will licks his lips which are suddenly dry rocking himself back and forth, feeling the chill and the damp as his eyes shut again and he tries to calm himself down.

"Will..." Jane suddenly reaches for his hand. Behind his eyes he

notices a burst of color. He then opens them and notices all of the lights are glowing as the cord is now plugged in the wall nearby. He notices a small stream of blood coming from her nose. "Friends give hope." She smiles.

A/N: Well, this came out a tiny bit, well maybe a bit more saccharine than intended, but I just really wanted to explore the possible relationship between these two and their impressions of each other. There might be more in the collection to come with the addition of other party and family members as well I'm sure. Send in requests if you're so inclined. And as always tell me your thoughts, I'd love to know.